Hiroshima mon amour

Hiroshima mon amour (French pronunciation: [iʁoʃima mɔ̃.n‿amuʁ], *Hiroshima My Love*; Japanese: 二十四時間の情事 *Nijūyojikan'nojōji*, *Twenty-four-hour affair*) is a 1959 French New Wave romantic drama film directed by French film director Alain Resnais, with a screenplay by Marguerite Duras. It is the documentation of an intensely personal conversation between a French-Japanese couple about memory and forgetfulness. It was a major catalyst for the Left Bank Cinema, making use of miniature flashbacks to create a nonlinear storyline.

Contents

- **Plot**
- **Cast**
- **Production**
- **Reception**
- **Film references**
- **Cultural errors**
- **In popular culture**
  - Music
  - Film
- **See also**
- **References**
- **External links**

Plot

Hiroshima mon amour concerns a series of conversations (or one enormous conversation) over a 36-hour long period between a French actress (Emmanuelle Riva), referred to as *Her*, and a Japanese architect (Eiji Okada), referred to as *Him.* They have had a brief relationship and are now separating. The two debate memory and forgetfulness as She prepares to depart, comparing failed relationships with the bombing of Hiroshima and the perspectives of people inside and outside the incidents. The early part of the film recounts, in the style of a documentary but narrated by the so far unidentified characters, the effects of the Hiroshima bomb on August 6, 1945, in particular the loss of hair and the complete anonymity of the remains of some victims. He had been conscripted into the Imperial Japanese Army, and his family was in Hiroshima on that day.

Hiroshima mon amour

Original 1959 movie poster

Directed by	Alain Resnais
Produced by	Samy Halfon Anatole Dauman
Written by	Marguerite Duras
Starring	Emmanuelle Riva Eiji Okada Stella Dassas Pierre Barbaud
Music by	Georges Delerue Giovanni Fusco
Cinematography	Michio Takahashi Sacha Vierny
Edited by	Jasmine Chasney Henri Colpi Anne Sarraute
Distributed by	Pathé Films
Release date	10 June 1959

Cast

- Emmanuelle Riva as Elle
- Eiji Okada as Lui
- Bernard Fresson as L'Allemand
- Stella Dassas as La Mère
- Pierre Barbaud as Le Père

Running time	90 minutes
Country	France / Japan
Language	French Japanese English

Production

According to James Monaco, Resnais was originally commissioned to make a short documentary about the atomic bomb, but spent several months confused about how to proceed because he did not want to recreate his 1956 Holocaust documentary *Night and Fog*. He later went to his producer and joked that the film could not be done unless Marguerite Duras was involved in writing the screenplay.[1]

The film was a co-production by companies from both Japan and France. The producers stipulated that one main character must be French and the other Japanese, and also required that the film be shot in both countries employing film crews comprising technicians from each.[1]

Reception

Hiroshima mon amour earned an Oscar nomination for screenwriter Marguerite Duras as well as the Fipresci International Critics' Prize at the 1959 Cannes Film Festival,[2] where the film was excluded from the official selection because of its sensitive subject matter of nuclear bombs as well as to avoid upsetting the U.S. government.[3] It won the prestigious Grand Prix of the Belgian Film Critics Association in 1960.[4] In 2002, it was voted by the international contributors of the French film magazine *Positif* to be one of the top 10 films since 1952, the first issue of the magazine.

Hiroshima mon amour has been described as "The *Birth of a Nation* of the French New Wave" by American critic Leonard Maltin.[5] New Wave filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard described the film's inventiveness as "Faulkner plus Stravinsky" and celebrated its originality, calling it "the first film without any cinematic references".[6] Filmmaker Eric Rohmer said, "I think that in a few years, in ten, twenty, or thirty years, we will know whether *Hiroshima mon amour* was the most important film since the war, the first modern film of sound cinema".[7]

Among the film's innovations is Resnais' experiments with very brief flashback sequences intercut into scenes to suggest the idea of a brief flash of memory. Resnais later used similar effects in *The War Is Over* and *Last Year at Marienbad*.

It was shown as part of the Cannes Classics section of the 2013 Cannes Film Festival,[8] as well as having nine screenings at the Harvard Film Archive between 28 November and 13 December 2014.[9]

Film references

In his book on Resnais, James Monaco ends his chapter on *Hiroshima mon amour* by claiming that the film contains a reference to the classic 1942 film *Casablanca*:

> “Here is an 'impossible' love story between two people struggling with the imagery of a distant war. At the end of this romantic, poignant movie about leave takings and”

> responsibilities, the two fateful lovers meet in a cafe. Resnais gives us a rare establishing shot of the location. 'He' is going to meet 'She' for the last time at a bar called 'The Casablanca' - right here in the middle of Hiroshima! It's still the same old story. A fight for love and glory. A case of do or die. The world will always welcome lovers. As time goes by.[1]

Cultural errors

In *Japan Journals: 1947-2004*, film historian Donald Richie tells in an entry for 25 January 1960 of seeing the film in Tokyo and remarks on various distracting (for the Japanese) cultural errors which Resnais made. He notes, for example, that the Japanese-language arrival and departure time announcements in the train scenes bear no relation to the time of day in which the scenes are set. Also, people pass through noren curtains into shops which are supposedly closed. The noren is a traditional sign that a shop is open for business and is invariably taken down at closing time.[10]

In popular culture

Music

The film has inspired several songs.

- The English band Ultravox recorded a song called "Hiroshima Mon Amour" for their 1977 album *Ha!-Ha!-Ha!*. The song was later covered by the Australian band The Church on their all-covers album *A Box of Birds* in 1999. Another notable version was recorded by Jan Linton on his King Records Japan-only album *Planet Japan* in 2004. The song is still performed live by former Ultravox! singer John Foxx, with his current group John Foxx and the Maths.
- In 1983, the rock band Alcatrazz recorded a song called "Hiroshima Mon Amour" for their debut album No Parole from Rock 'n' Roll. The song was written by English singer Graham Bonnet (ex-Rainbow) with Swedish guitar virtuoso Yngwie Malmsteen. Bonnet's lyrics and song title were inspired by the film which he had seen in school. The song became one of the band's most popular and is still being performed live (2017) by the Graham Bonnet Band.
- In 2004, the Peruvian band El Hombre Misterioso released the album Pez Raro, which included the song "Mon Amour". The lyrics and song title were inspired by the film. The line "Hiroshima Mon Amour" is heard in the chorus.
- In 2008, The (International) Noise Conspiracy released the album The Cross of My Calling, which included the song "Hiroshima Mon Amour".

Film

- In 2001, Japanese film director Nobuhiro Suwa directed a remake, titled *H Story*.[11]
- In 2003, Iranian film director Bahman Pour-Azar released *Where Or When*. The 85-minute film places Pour-Azar's characters in the same circumstances as Resnais' nearly a half century later. However, the current global tension of today's world is the backdrop instead of post-war Hiroshima. When screening the film, Stuart Alson, who founded the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival, said that the piece was "a parallel line of work with the French masterpiece *Hiroshima mon amour*".[12]

See also

- List of avant-garde films of the 1950s

References

1. Monaco, James (1979). Alain Resnais (https://archive.org/details/alainresnais00mona_0). New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-520037-3.
2. "Festival de Cannes: Hiroshima Mon Amour" (http://www.festival-cannes.com/en/archives/ficheFilm/id/3472/year/1959.html). *festival-cannes.com*. Retrieved 2009-02-14.
3. Lanzoni, Remi Fournier *French Cinema: From Its Beginnings to the Present*, London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2004, p229
4. " "The Artist" reçoit le grand prix de l'Union de la critique de cinéma" (https://web.archive.org/web/20131220060839/http://www.rtl.be/info/magazine/cinema/954923/-the-artist-recoit-le-grand-prix-de-l-union-de-la-critique-de-cinema-). *rtl.be* (in French). Archived from the original (http://www.rtl.be/loisirs/cinema/news/20802/-the-artist-recoit-le-grand-prix-de-l-union-de-la-critique-de-cinema) on 2013-12-20. Retrieved 2012-07-22.
5. Maltin, Leonard (1995). "Alain Resnais". *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia* (https://archive.org/details/leonardmaltinsmo1994unse/page/744). Plume. p. 744 (https://archive.org/details/leonardmaltinsmo1994unse/page/744). ISBN 978-0-452-27058-9. Retrieved 2011-09-02. "Resnais's first 35 mm feature *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) — in 1946, he made a 16 mm feature *Ouvert pour cause d'inventaire* — dealt with the nature of history and memory, and deviated from traditional notions of narrative time as it recounted a fleeting liaison between a French actress and Japanese architect. Its sexual candor and provocative ideas, wedded to a dazzlingly sophisticated visual style, made *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* the New Wave's *The Birth of a Nation* and it deservedly won the Cannes Film Festival International Critics Prize."
6. "in Michael S. Smith, "Hiroshima Mon Amour", DVD release review in Popmatters.com" (https://web.archive.org/web/20060421233001/http://www.popmatters.com/film/reviews/h/hiroshima-mon-amour-dvd.shtml). Archived from the original (http://popmatters.com/film/reviews/h/hiroshima-mon-amour-dvd.shtml) on 2006-04-21. Retrieved 2006-07-01.
7. Kent Jones, "Time Indefinite", essay for the (http://www.criterion.com/asp/release.asp?id=196&eid=317&section=essay&page=1)Criterion Collection DVD release. Accessed 23 May 2007
8. "Cannes Classics 2013 line-up unveiled" (http://www.screendaily.com/news/cannes-classics-2013-line-up/5054402.article?blocktitle=Latest-News&contentID=1846). *Screen Daily*. Retrieved 2013-04-30.
9. "Harvard Film Archive Detailed Calendar Page for "Hiroshima Mon Amour" " (http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/films/2014novdec/hiroshima.html). *Harvard Film Archive*. Retrieved 2015-01-28.
10. Richie, Donald *Japan Journals: 1947-2004*, Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2004, p126
11. "Festival de Cannes: H Story" (http://www.festival-cannes.com/en/archives/ficheFilm/id/2001433/year/2001.html). *festival-cannes.com*. Retrieved 2009-10-19.
12. "Best French Films Ever. 39. Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (http://www.topfrenchfilms.info/39_hiroshima.php). *www.topfrenchfilms.info*. Retrieved 2014-12-12.

External links

- *Hiroshima mon amour* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0052893/) on IMDb
- *Hiroshima mon amour* (https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v22499) at AllMovie
- *Hiroshima mon amour* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/hiroshima_mon_amour) at Rotten Tomatoes
- *Hiroshima mon amour* (http://www.tcm.turner.com/tcmdb/title/title.jsp?stid=78083) at the TCM Movie Database

- *Hiroshima mon amour: Time Indefinite* (https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/291-hiroshima-mon-amour-time-indefinite) an essay by Kent Jones at the Criterion Collection

---

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hiroshima_mon_amour&oldid=943796246"

This page was last edited on 3 March 2020, at 23:41 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.